

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

# SENATE BILL NO. 493

95TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR MAYER.

Read 1st time February 25, 2009, and ordered printed.

TERRY L. SPIELER, Secretary.

1803S.01I

## AN ACT

To repeal section 160.545, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to A+ schools program.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section  
2 enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows:

160.545. 1. There is hereby established within the department of  
2 elementary and secondary education the "A+ Schools Program" to be administered  
3 by the commissioner of education. The program shall consist of grant awards  
4 made to public secondary schools that demonstrate a commitment to ensure that:

5 (1) All students be graduated from school;

6 (2) All students complete a selection of high school studies that is  
7 challenging and for which there are identified learning expectations; and

8 (3) All students proceed from high school graduation to a college or  
9 postsecondary vocational or technical school or high-wage job with work place  
10 skill development opportunities.

11 2. The state board of education shall promulgate rules and regulations for  
12 the approval of grants made under the program to schools that:

13 (1) Establish measurable districtwide performance standards for the goals  
14 of the program outlined in subsection 1 of this section; and

15 (2) Specify the knowledge, skills and competencies, in measurable terms,  
16 that students must demonstrate to successfully complete any individual course  
17 offered by the school, and any course of studies which will qualify a student for  
18 graduation from the school; and

19 (3) Do not offer a general track of courses that, upon completion, can lead

**EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in this bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

20 to a high school diploma; and

21 (4) Require rigorous coursework with standards of competency in basic  
22 academic subjects for students pursuing vocational and technical education as  
23 prescribed by rule and regulation of the state board of education; and

24 (5) Have a partnership plan developed in cooperation and with the advice  
25 of local business persons, labor leaders, parents, and representatives of college  
26 and postsecondary vocational and technical school representatives, with the plan  
27 then approved by the local board of education. The plan shall specify a  
28 mechanism to receive information on an annual basis from those who developed  
29 the plan in addition to senior citizens, community leaders, and teachers to update  
30 the plan in order to best meet the goals of the program as provided in subsection  
31 1 of this section. Further, the plan shall detail the procedures used in the school  
32 to identify students that may drop out of school and the intervention services to  
33 be used to meet the needs of such students. The plan shall outline counseling  
34 and mentoring services provided to students who will enter the work force upon  
35 graduation from high school, address apprenticeship and intern programs, and  
36 shall contain procedures for the recruitment of volunteers from the community  
37 of the school to serve in schools receiving program grants.

38 3. A school district may participate in the program irrespective of its  
39 accreditation classification by the state board of education, provided it meets all  
40 other requirements.

41 4. By rule and regulation, the state board of education may determine a  
42 local school district variable fund match requirement in order for a school or  
43 schools in the district to receive a grant under the program. However, no school  
44 in any district shall receive a grant under the program unless the district  
45 designates a salaried employee to serve as the program coordinator, with the  
46 district assuming a minimum of one-half the cost of the salary and other benefits  
47 provided to the coordinator. Further, no school in any district shall receive a  
48 grant under the program unless the district makes available facilities and  
49 services for adult literacy training as specified by rule of the state board of  
50 education.

51 5. For any school that meets the requirements for the approval of the  
52 grants authorized by this section and specified in subsection 2 of this section for  
53 three successive school years, by August first following the third such school year,  
54 the commissioner of education shall present a plan to the superintendent of the  
55 school district in which such school is located for the waiver of rules and

56 regulations to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to enhance  
57 and encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services in the  
58 school. The provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the plan  
59 presented to the superintendent shall provide a summary waiver, with no  
60 conditions, for the pupil testing requirements pursuant to section 160.257 in the  
61 school. Further, the provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the  
62 plan shall detail a means for the waiver of requirements otherwise imposed on  
63 the school related to the authority of the state board of education to classify  
64 school districts pursuant to subdivision (9) of section 161.092, RSMo, and such  
65 other rules and regulations as determined by the commissioner of education,  
66 except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not other schools in the  
67 school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this  
68 subsection. However, any waiver provided to any school as outlined in this  
69 subsection shall be void on June thirtieth of any school year in which the school  
70 fails to meet the requirements for the approval of the grants authorized by this  
71 section as specified in subsection 2 of this section.

72         6. For any school year, grants authorized by subsections 1 [to 3], **2, and**  
73 **4** of this section shall be funded with the amount appropriated for this program,  
74 less those funds necessary to reimburse eligible students pursuant to subsection  
75 7 of this section.

76         7. The commissioner of education shall, by rule and regulation of the state  
77 board of education and with the advice of the coordinating board for higher  
78 education, establish a procedure for the reimbursement of the cost of tuition,  
79 books and fees to any public community college or [within the limits established  
80 in subsection 9 of this section any two-year public or private] vocational or  
81 technical school [for any student] **or within the limits established in**  
82 **subsection 9 of this section any two-year private vocational or technical**  
83 **school for any student:**

84         (1) Who has attended a public high school in the state for at least three  
85 years immediately prior to graduation that meets the requirements of subsection  
86 2 of this section, except that students who are active duty military dependents  
87 who, in the school year immediately preceding graduation, meet all other  
88 requirements of this subsection and are attending a school that meets the  
89 requirements of subsection 2 of this section shall be exempt from the three-year  
90 attendance requirement of this subdivision; and

91         (2) Who has made a good faith effort to first secure all available federal

92 sources of funding that could be applied to the reimbursement described in this  
93 subsection; and

94 (3) Who has earned a minimal grade average while in high school as  
95 determined by rule of the state board of education, and other requirements for the  
96 reimbursement authorized by this subsection as determined by rule and  
97 regulation of said board.

98 8. The commissioner of education shall develop a procedure for evaluating  
99 the effectiveness of the program described in this section. Such evaluation shall  
100 be conducted annually with the results of the evaluation provided to the governor,  
101 speaker of the house, and president pro tempore of the senate.

102 9. For a two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school to  
103 obtain reimbursements under subsection 7 of this section, [except for those  
104 schools that are receiving reimbursements on August 28, 2008,] the following  
105 requirements shall be satisfied:

106 (1) Such two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school shall  
107 be a member of the North Central Association and be accredited by the Higher  
108 Learning Commission as of July 1, 2008, and maintain such accreditation;

109 (2) Such two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school shall  
110 be designated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue  
111 Code of 1986, as amended;

112 (3) No two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school shall  
113 receive tuition reimbursements in excess of the tuition rate charged by a public  
114 community college for course work offered by the private vocational or technical  
115 school within the service area of such college; and

116 (4) The reimbursements provided to any two-year private vocational or  
117 technical school shall not violate the provisions of article IX, section 8, or article  
118 I, section 7, of the Missouri Constitution or the first amendment of the United  
119 States Constitution.

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